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ABSTRACT

This monograph, one in a series, describes ways in which elementary teachers have brought arts to the classroom. Descriptions of what teachers are doing are organized by themes. The first theme is the use of the arts in basic skill development. One teacher in Casper, Wyoming, produces rebus books for her students. These books offer a means of expressing words by using drawings or pictures which the children can identify using the correct word for the visual cue. Another teacher in a low income neighborhood of Washington, D.C. developed a very successful creative writing and dramatic arts program to provide remedial reading and language development assistance. The second theme is the value of the arts for their own sake. In one elementary school in Indiana, students enthusiastically produce a literary magazine "Harmony Times." The third theme focused on how some teachers use the arts to nurture self expression and individual achievement. Through one teacher's use of the arts in the classroom, students who had not previously experienced the satisfaction of achievement in traditional subject areas blossomed. The remaining themes of the monograph include the use of the arts to overcome community isolation, introduce and reinforce cultural and ethnic pride, and meet the needs of special students: the integration of the arts throughout the course of study: and the demonstration of professional leadership. (Author/RM)

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Arts in the classroom: what one elementary teacher can do

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FOREWORD

Despite the unprecedented flourishing of the arts in America today, arts programs in the nation's schools have not experienced a corresponding expansion. In fact, with nationwide public attention focused on such problems as declining enrollment, vandalism, low test scores, and spiraling inflation, budgetary priorities are dictating tne reduction of school arts programs. In some school districts, arts programs are being eliminated entirely.

We believe that school arts programs are *basic* to individual development and a sound education. Further, we believe that the arts should be used to stimulate learning and self-expression, and recognized as valid ways to learn. If school arts programs are to continue and expand, they require the support of educators, school board members, parents, artists, arts administrators, students, community leaders, legislators, and government agencies.

The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc. (AEA) has established a National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education addressed to these groups of individual advocates. AEA is a national organization formed in 1977 following the publication of *Coming To Our Senses*, the Report of the National Panel on The Arts, Education, and Americans, David Rockefeller, Jr., Chairman.

The AEA Advocacy Program, which encourages the cooperative action of these groups to ensure local level support for school arts programs, includes a public awareness campaign and consumer information service. The service provides Advocacy Program enrollees with a variety of arts in education information–the AEA newsletter, access to the AEA speaker referral service, informal consultation, and monographs that address pertinent arts in education issues and topics.

This monograph, part of an ongoing series, speaks to one or more of the aforementioned school arts support groups. While we recognize that few monographs will speak directly to everyone, we attempt in each to address a variety of individuals. We hope this monograph will prove helpful to you in your support of arts in education. If you are not yet enrolled in the AEA National Advocacy Program and would like to do so, write to:

The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc.
Box 5297, Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163

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We wish to thank Nancy Morison Ambler and Barbara R. Strong for authoring *One teacher . . .* AEA's National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education is coordinated by Educational Facilities Laboratories, a division of the Academy for Educational Development, of which Miss Ambler is a Project Director and Miss Strong a Project Assistant. Miss Ambler, formerly public relations coordinator for the Opera Company of Boston and educational director for Virginia Opera Association, serves as Project Director for the Advocacy Program and editor of the monograph series. Miss Strong, whose background is in arts management, is Project Assistant for the Advocacy Program and responsible for editorial and photo research for the monograph series. Alan C. Green, Academy Senior Vice President and EFL Division Director, is Project Administrator for the Advocacy Program.

We are deeply grateful to the following organizations for helping to make possible AEA's National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education and, as part of that program, the ongoing monograph series: the National Endowment for the Arts, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Alcoa Foundation.

AEA's Board of Directors and Advocacy Advisory Group provided insight on the shaping of the Advocacy Program, and the Advisory Group in particular spent many hours reviewing monograph outlines and drafts.

Finally, we acknowledge with gratitude the hundreds of artists, arts administrators, community leaders, educators, federal, state, and local government administrators, parents, and school board members who continue to share with us their knowledge and myriad experiences in the realm of school arts programs. Without their patient and detailed explanations of how their own programs are designed, managed, and expanded– without their special vignettes about these programs–we would be unable to produce the monographs.

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An overwhelming response

A teacher and a group of students in a classroom remain the common denominator of American education. If the arts are to be an increasingly integral part of the educational experience, the teacher in the classroom is a place to begin. The purpose of this monograph is to present ways in which one teacher can bring arts to the classroom–and to help you gain the confidence to undertake similar ventures.

Through a variety of sources–reports, articles in news media and journals, conferences and meetings, informal conversations with educators, artists and arts administrators, correspondence with Advocacy Program enrollees–we have sensed that, across the country, increasing numbers of teachers are using the arts in their classrooms. Several months ago we asked those on our mailing list to tell us of such teachers who are using the arts creatively–to make learning richer and more exciting, to help students master basic reading and math skills, to stimulate students who otherwise are disenchanted with education, to nourish and foster latent talent.

The response to our request was overwhelming. We received more than 700 letters describing the work of teachers whose use of arts in the classroom is exciting and provocative. From this rich lode of names and experiences, we proffer a range of approaches and activities.

We focus our attention here on the elementary (pre-kindergarten–grade 3) teacher (the work of secondary teachers will be profiled in a forthcoming monograph, *Arts in the classroom: what one secondary teacher can do*). In addition, we concentrate our reportage on the initiative and enthusiasm of individual teachers, rather than on that of teachers working within a team or districtwide effort. Rare is the classroom arts program that can flourish without a school support system, and we submit that teachers should not be faced with a perennial solo flight as they strive to bring arts to their students. Our emphasis here, however, is on the many ways in which one individual teacher–on his or her own–has successfully planned and implemented programs to bring the arts into the classroom, using them there for the greater benefit of the students.

We are grateful to each and every individual who responded to our initial query, especially to those with whom we spoke by

telephone and who have given us permission to include their names and addresses. We have categorized the range of teachers' ideas and experiences according to the dominant themes which surfaced during our review of the responses received. As you will see, the themes do not fall into neat packages and necessarily overlap somewhat. All of the teachers could be included, for example, in Theme 3—Use of the arts to nurture self-expression and individual achievement.

Finally, we direct your attention not only to the activities highlighted here, but to the teaching approaches and strategies as well. Many of the activities have been used by teachers for decades. In their own right, most of these activities are neither extraordinary nor deserving of publicity. The range of teaching strategies, however, represents approaches that are fresh, original, unique. To the time-honored teaching approaches, then, these teachers bring a personal excitement and commitment, together with careful planning, preparation, and follow-up. The *combination* of activities and strategic approaches merit your attention.

Theme 1. Use of the arts in basic skill development

Based on the information we received from myriad sources, it is evident that hundreds–most probably, thousands–of teachers across the United States personally advocate the use of the arts in students' basic skill development. These teachers daily incorporate the arts in classroom learning activities such as number concepts, sentence structure, reading comprehension, and phonetics. They use the arts to provide insights, sharpen the focus or reinforce a concept, and weave interdisciplinary tapestries. Proven results using such teaching techniques are dramatic: increased attendance, above-average test scores, and achievement by students who previously had demonstrated little motivation to learn. These teachers report their classrooms are filled with the electric excitement that precedes new lessons, and the joy of learning.

■ Casper, Wyoming, is a modern boom town located high in the Rocky Mountains about 300 miles north of Denver. Coal, oil, and uranium mines in the surrounding mountains have brought new prosperity to this old mining town, and with it, a new way of life. The community now is comprised largely of a transient population, for as various segments of mine construction are completed, the construction workers and their families move on to the next job, the next town.

Brenda Poe Uhlich has taught first grade at Casper's Grant Elementary School for twelve years. She has seen the children of the construction workers and miners come and go throughout the school years and recognizes the problems they have in adapting to new schools, new teaching methods, the competition of new classmates. Early on, she realized that in order for her students to be successful in mastering such basic skills as reading, math, concentration, and motor development, it would be necessary for her to augment the standard curriculum. The arts seemed to her an obvious way to help the students learn–and love doing so–and she quickly found ways to integrate the arts as learning tools throughout the curriculum.

For example, Mrs. Uhlich produces rebus books for her students. These books offer a means of expressing words by using drawings or pictures which the children can identify using the correct word for the visual cue. "The books are a great success," she exults. "The children become bookworms and learn to love reading almost before they know their letters!"

Mrs. Uhlich, herself an artist, designs and produces each book on her own in her spare time. First she sketches a story line and accompanying pictures. After writing the complete story, she types and reproduces it on the school ditto machine. Finally, she adds the essential color cutouts–rainbows, turtles, tigers, apples–that will help focus the attention of the children while assisting them to visualize what they are reading. The books range in difficulty according to the reading skills of the individual students who will be using them, and some have more visual keys than others.

The students borrow from Mrs. Uhlich's collection of rebus books as they would from a library. They are required to read the books at home with their parents, and review with them the reading comprehension section at the end of each book. "At this age, there is a need to focus on the obvious to facilitate comprehension," explains Mrs. Uhlich. "That's why the rebus books are such a help to the children. It is obvious that a picture of an apple represents the word *apple*, and the children can focus on this."

■ **Ruby Gary** is a master teacher who believes that the arts are an invaluable means of reaching students–of helping them learn about their studies *and* themselves. Mrs. Gary, an educator for twenty five years, is currently a fourth-grade teacher at Peabody Elementary School in Washington, D.C. Peabody is located in the Capitol Hill area, a predominantly low-income neighborhood now in the midst of revitalization by middle- and upper-income professionals. Although the neighborhood is undergoing rapid change, Peabody is still attended by children from families of modest economic means.

For Mrs. Gary, using the arts in her classroom is a "necessity" to ensure the attendance and attention of her students. "Years ago, when I used only the regular curriculum, I lost half my children," she laments. "I *had* to use the arts so they would come to class and then be able to go home each day feeling good about themselves–so they could think, 'I've done something productive today.' So many students at Peabody tend to remain at the bottom of the grading system, trailing behind all day, year after year. But when I use the arts in my classes, every child has the opportunity to be a star," Mrs. Gary goes on to explain. "In history class, for example, a person will write a report on a specified topic, such as John Paul Jones. Another person will illustrate the report. Other students will present a dramatic reading that yet another student will have written. Everybody can use individual talents to do well on a specific assignment. That way the students who always read well will think, 'I may read better than you, but you can draw, sing, act, or dance well, and so you're a good thinker, too.' Naturally, this improves the self-image of the students who otherwise are potential dropouts."

Although Mrs. Gary uses the arts in all her classes "at one point or another," drama is her forte. She was selected to develop a creative writing and dramatic arts program to provide remedial reading and language development assistance to Peabody students, and expanded the dramatic arts program to involve the entire school. For Black History month, she wrote and directed a salute–through dance, drama, and music–to Martin Luther King, Jr. The question arose whether only Peabody's black students should have the opportunity to participate in the show and Mrs. Gary decided without hesitation to cross racial lines, casting without regard to color. After selecting a cast of fifty, Mrs. Gary felt keenly that no student should feel left out of the production. Backstage work with sets and props proved the answer, at the same time that it helped reinforce the importance of math and problem-solving skills.

The students' salute to Dr. King was presented for Peabody students, teachers, parents, and community leaders. Not only the children involved, but the community as well gained an understanding of and respect

and admiration for the black leader and the black experience. Participating black students gained pride in their own heritage, and white students an empathy for that heritage. Together, all of the participants were drawn closer in the mutual exhilaration of successful achievement and their parents drawn closer via the bond of their children's collective success.

Theme 2: Value of the arts for their own sake

Another reason teachers feel that the arts are important to schooling is simply the value of the arts for their own sake. These teachers work toward the realization of their students' aesthetic potential–both expressive and critical–whether exposing them to, say, painting and flute, or a broad range of artistic experiences.

■ "**Marty Belcher** believes in his students and their artistic ability," exclaims a delighted parent whose child is a pupil of Mr. Belcher. "The students realize this and respond in wonderful ways. My child's interest in art, poetry, and writing is cemented thanks to his encouragement and interest."

Mr. Belcher, a fifth- and sixth-grade teacher, specializes in language arts at Bloomington, Indiana's Harmony Elementary School. An important element of his curriculum is the production of *Harmony Times*, a children's literary magazine. Published twice a year, the magazine contains a rich array of poetry, short stories, photography, and drawings by Harmony Elementary School students. More than a hundred copies of each issue are printed, often featuring editorial themes such as "sun" or "technology." Students are also encouraged to write and design their own chapbooks (small books containing popular literature).

"These publications are produced on a shoestring budget," says Marty Belcher. "My only tools include a typewriter, mat knife, and triangular straight edge. *Harmony Times* publications are reproduced on Xerox machines of the copy house offering the lowest bid, and chapbook covers are donated by a parent who owns a printshop. Any teacher can execute these types of projects. They require little money, materials, and expertise."

To share his students' work, Mr. Belcher arranges for their artwork to be hung in a local coffee shop and their creative writing, poetry, and drawings are published in several local journals. In addition, he introduces their work to students at the Indiana University School of Education, teachers in the Indianapolis public schools, and, as he says, "innumerable kids who do not attend Harmony School." To add another dimension to his classroom and further the impact of the arts, Mr. Belcher invites local poets to Harmony to work with students.

Mr. Belcher is especially concerned with using the language arts "to help [his] students become more creative, exploring possibilities and ideas." Dylan Wissing, one of his ten-year-old students, created a chapbook entitled *The Book of Rare Alien Animals*, which contains fourteen descriptions and illustrations of imaginary beasts. As Mr. Belcher notes, "Dylan has a rather surrealistic style and creates his own personal mythology." Another ten-year-old student, Michael Valliant, wrote poems about things he found in nature, such as geese and icicles, and titled his chapbook, soberly, *A Book*. "Michael lives in the country," explains Mr. Belcher, "and has an elemental feel in his writing. I supplied him with a roll of film in the hope that he could document his poems. He did a beautiful job!"

"Poetry is *natural* to children," asserts Marty Belcher," and their enthusiasm translates to motivation."

■ At the Central School in Glencoe, Illinois, sixth-grade teacher **Marvin Martin** begins each day's classroom session by reading a poem, discussing a painting or other piece of visual art, or listening to a recording of classical music. Mr. Martin prepares all of his instructional materials for his classes and incorporates the arts into all aspects of his teaching. He uses primary sources (original paintings and music) rather than workbooks and standard textbooks.

In his world history class, for instance, he emphasizes the arts of civilization, from prehistoric times through the present. (Mr. Martin has traveled widely and produces slide tape presentations utilizing his personal collection of more than 30,000 slides.) In addition, he presents weekly slide lectures in the school auditorium for other classes in the school. Subjects range from "The Treasures of Athens" to "The French Impressionists" to "The Genius of Michelangelo."

Each year Marvin Martin invites his students to accompany him on a theatre/music trip to New York. He also orchestrates Big Weekends for his sixth graders throughout the school year. Plays, concerts, dance recitals, and museum trips are all included as special weekend activities as the students and their teacher explore the arts in and around the Chicago area.

Mr. Martin's students have the opportunity to produce their own art as well. Sixth graders annually participate in the production of three plays, written, directed, and produced by their teacher, who has produced a total of thirty-five children's plays during the past twenty-four years.

His students are highly motivated and stimulated, and they see the arts as part of their everyday lives and ongoing education. Curiosity and challenge are part of every class period for them and extend beyond the formal end of the school day.

As a community resident writes of Marvin Martin: "The accomplishments of this remarkable educator are inspiring—to students, parents, and our entire community."

Theme 3: Use of the arts to nurture creative self-expression and individual achievement

Through one teacher's use of the arts in the classroom, students who have not previously experienced the satisfaction of achievement in "traditional" subject areas, such as reading and math, can blossom. Many such students, during each school day and ensuing school year, remain at the "bottom" of their class, some promoted only after continued failure in one grade. Faced with a pattern of frustration, humiliation, and failure—and viewing themselves as losers—these students can become the potential troublemakers and dropouts.

Through a sophisticated musical interpretation or a witty and descriptive turn of phrase, however, such students demonstrate their potential to succeed. Armed with the self-discipline that is the prerequisite for consistent artistic achievement, and with a new mastery of form and technical skills, they can enjoy a heightened self-concept. Consequently, their peers, families, and supervisors have the opportunity to respect that

success, and recognize these students as individuals with talent, imagination, and intelligence, each in their own way.

■ "Being able to think on their feet, building self-confidence, and developing lifelong interests," explains **Lorna Monson**, are just a few of the benefits students accrue from participating in arts programs such as drama, puppetry, and a touring choral group. Ms. Monson, a sixth-grade teacher for the past seven years at Salt Lake City's Emerson Elementary School, makes these experiences possible for her own pupils as well as other interested students.

For example, as part of a history unit on the Renaissance, her students study music of the period and learn to play the recorder. Vocabulary of the Renaissance is studied, and students perform puppet shows adapting authentic scripts to fit their own puppet creations. Designing and producing their own costumes, props, and scenery, students choose a Shakespearean play to perform each year. As part of their physical education program, they learn to wind the Maypole. The history unit culminates in a Shakespeare festival presented by students for parents and other area elementary schools.

Another arts activity initiated and made possible for Emerson students by Ms. Monson is the Sunrise Singers choral group. Participating students, who receive elective course credit for their endeavors, rehearse under Ms. Monson's direction for a half hour semiweekly before classes begin. Now in its fifth year, the ensemble performs after school hours for delighted and enthusiastic nursing home residents, school and university students, and community groups in the surrounding Salt Lake City area.

Lorna Monson notes that many of her arts projects are in large part made possible through the "tremendous support and input of parents." In fact, she usually "puts out feelers" during the planning stages of her projects to determine the level of parent commitment to the project. For instance, mothers of student performers created the costumes for a recent performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*. Also, as part of a unit on ancient Oriental history, parents volunteered their time to present their Oriental art objects to their children's class.

The daughter of an architect, Lorna Monson says that the arts have always been a

natural part of her family life, and although she is very interested in providing a basis for art appreciation, literature, and movement activities in her classroom, her forte is drama and music. In fact, students at Emerson have come to expect her guidance on at least one play each year, and early in September they enter her classroom with two questions: "Can we do a play?" and "Which one?"

Although some of the arts activities Ms. Monson organizes are for extra credit, this does not affect the quality of the experience. "I'm strictly an 'in-front-of-the-curtain' director," she explains, "and when the curtain goes up for a performance, the students are on their own. If something happens that wasn't supposed to happen, *they* have to deal with it. It's a chance to be on their own, under pressure." The benefits are well worth the long hours of preparation, however, and leaders emerge and self-confidence increases.

■ According to the elementary art supervisor in her district, **Jeannine Carder** is "an inspiration to her fellow teachers" at Audubon Elementary School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The school is filled with outstanding children's artwork generated by her second graders, both individually and in concert with others.

While Ms. Carder integrates the arts in such subjects as social studies and the language arts, she also suggests arts activities as seat work for her students while their peers practice reading or other individual pursuits. The students work cooperatively on such projects as stage props, murals, and puppet design and construction—projects which generate mutual admiration while nurturing individual creativity and self-expression.

Arts activities culminate in the spring of each year with the publication of books written, designed, and illustrated by the students. But Ms. Carder works throughout the school year to motivate students and reinforce their creativity, all the while fostering in them a positive self-image and an understanding of other cultures. The result: individual and collective pride, delight, and camaraderie on the part of students as their work is displayed throughout the district, and admiration and motivation on the part of district teachers and administrators.

Theme 4: Use of the arts to overcome community isolation

Isolation, or a sense thereof, can occur at several levels within a school, and the arts offer one teacher multiple opportunities for overcoming that isolation. At one level, for instance, is the isolation of the underprivileged student who attends classes each day bolstered by only the most basic physical requirements. Such a child may feel isolated from more fortunate classmates. At the same time, the general student body may feel isolated from each other and their teachers by virtue of the absence of a sensitive and humane educational environment.

At another level, students may feel an isolation from the larger community in which their school is located. They may be out of touch with the real life events shaping the locale, or unaware of the rich experiences it offers them simply by virtue of being there.

At yet another level, there may be isolation on the part of school *and* community from the larger global community. The may lack an understanding of the very real ...ferences and similarities between their culture and those of their peers worldwide.

The arts can help one teacher bring beauty into lives where there is little, open doors and broaden horizons, and cement a bond of mutual understanding, trust, and friendship with a child halfway across the world.

■ **Patricia Spradlin** is an art teacher at Webb Elementary, an inner-city school in the ghetto area of Northeast Washington, D.C. The majority of her students have never visited a museum in this city revered for its cultural institutions. For the past five years, though, Mrs. Spradlin has arranged for every single child in her school to visit one of the Washington museums.

"The first year, we just went out and stood in line along with everyone else," she recalls with a laugh. "For most of the kids, it was their first time in a museum, but they loved it so much, I knew I had to arrange a trip for everyone each year from that point on," says Mrs. Spradlin. And arranging a trip is no small task, it becomes clear. First are the logistics of the outing— arranging a time convenient for the museum, arranging for transportation for the 1,000 or so students, securing permission from the school superintendent and all parents, and arranging for parent volunteers (1 per 10 students) to accompany the students on their field trips.

After the nuts and bolts are secured, Mrs. Spradlin begins to prepare the students for their upcoming trip. For a recent trip to the National Gallery's new East Wing, she first purchased for her classes a book on the building and arranged to borrow a film that described its architecture. In class she prepared bulletin boards with pictures of its dramatic design and the collection it houses, and discussed the objectives of the upcoming trip.

Once at the East Wing, the classes were divided into smaller groups and given guided tours by the docents. The huge mobile by Alexander Calder proved especially popular, so after the field trip Mrs. Spradlin and her students worked with mobiles and sculpture in class. The younger students painted the things they liked best. Classroom teachers followed up the visit by having the children write about their museum experience and then worked with Mrs. Spradlin to display the paragraphs on bulletin boards alongside student art inspired by the visit.

"The parent volunteers love the museum trips, too, and the tours conducted by the docents make the museum experience more meaningful to the parents. Many of the parent volunteers join us again and again for tours. My students also tell me that they enjoyed the museum trip so much that they've gone back later and taken their parents," Mrs. Spradlin notes.

"I can't say I've changed people's lives," she says in all modesty, laughing, "but I've had some children who've been held back in school several years. They couldn't function in math or reading, but they were obviously intelligent in terms of art, and their choice of colors and shapes was very sophisticated. I also have a student whom I encouraged to apply for a scholarship at the Corcoran Museum of Art Saturday Program. He was accepted, and is definitely on his way to becoming a full-fledged artist. I can't say the trip to the Corcoran did it, but it certainly fed his desire."

■ At the C. Fred Schroeder School in Huntington Beach, California, students are exchanging artwork with their peers in Kaizuka, Japan. **Linda O'Neill**, fifth-grade teacher at the Schroeder School, initiated the exchange during a personal visit to the Orient. On her return to the United States, she included among her mementos student artwork. Once back at Schroeder, she arranged to send artwork created by her students to children across the Pacific Ocean. The swap also includes original pen and ink drawings by Schroeder's principal exchanged for oil paintings by the director of the Japanese school.

While expanding their own creative expression and communication, Ms. O'Neill's students are enjoying a new level of cultural understanding–both internationally and in terms of the large Oriental population in their own region.

Theme 5: Use of the arts to introduce and reinforce cultural and ethnic pride

One of America's great strengths lies in its pluralistic society. Too often, however, young schoolmates are not aware of the importance of each and every cultural and ethnic group that has helped shape the nation. In recognizing only one or two ethnic groups as important, they often seek to camouflage their own cultural identity, or condescend to those they believe to be "not as good" as themselves. The arts offer a means of helping students identify the elements indigenous to various cultures–theirs and others. In so doing, the children find their individual and cultural pride reinforced, and gain an understanding and respect that transcend ethnic boundaries and diverse heritages.

■ The student body of P.S. 119 reflects the rich diversity of its location–New York's Lower East Side. **Nina Drooker**, teacher of a sixth-grade class of gifted and talented students at the school, utilizes this splendid ethnic mix in many areas of the curriculum, especially in her social studies class.

Three years ago she initiated a genealogy project to illustrate the prescribed sixth-grade social studies curriculum: a study of archaeology. "Instead of looking only at history books," she explains, "we look at the parallel in our own families. Using oral history, photographs, and memorabilia, the students trace their individual cultural history. Over a period of three or four months, they research the derivations of their own names, holidays, and family traditions.

"For instance," Mrs. Drooker explains, "the kids talk with their grandparents about what it was like when *they* attended school. Of course, many grandparents in our school didn't grow up in the United States, so there is a great variety to the responses. The students ask, 'What did you do for fun? How did you meet grandfather or grandmother? Have you lived through any wars?' The students in my class alone come from twelve to fifteen different cultures, and you can imagine the answers their grandparents and parents give them!"

When the genealogy study unit nears completion, each student produces a folder, which includes the material collected over the introspective course of study. Then they share their families and traditions–Hispanic,

Pakistani, Filipino, European, Chinese, Japanese, Ukrainian–with each other and the school, and–coming full circle–present the folders as gifts to their own relatives.

■ Orcas Island (pop. 2,000), one of 174 islands in Washington's Puget Sound, is fifteen minutes by ferryboat from the mainland and about an hour and a half from Seattle. Island devotees/residents, including a substantial year-round artistic community, are enamored with the area's pristine fir forests and magnificent snow-covered mountains. "There are so many people here on the island with so many talents that, when I began teaching here 11 years ago, I began asking different artists in to my classroom," says **Gail Brown**, fourth-grade teacher at Orcas School. "Kids need a lot of basic drilling and practice, but the arts bring *life* to the classroom and to studying. There simply weren't any arts in the school when I first came here, but that's all changed now," she exclaims. "Every day now the school is bustling with artists coming and going and practicing their crafts."

What precipitated this change of scene? "When I first asked local artists into my

classroom, the community response was extremely positive, but after a while I realized that I could not continue to ask for free lectures and demonstrations, to say nothing of the expensive supplies donated by the artists," she says. Through her efforts and those of other Orcas faculty and administrators, and with the help of the Washington State Director of Arts Education Programs, the U. S. Department of Education funds Program Orcas, which makes possible the multitude of artists' visits to the island school.

Mrs. Brown reinforces such exposure in her classroom, and her recently published book, *The Big Event*, suggests "big ideas" classroom teachers can use to keep students excited about school. One "Big Event" she produces annually with her fourth graders is inspired by the ethnic heritage and historic roots of the Orcas Island locale. During study of the Pacific Northwest Indian tribes, Gail Brown's students transform their classroom into an Indian museum. Mrs. Brown has engaged in extensive personal study of these tribes, which she characterizes as "some of the most artistic of all primitive cultures." Students write detailed and illustrated reports on various topics pertaining to the lifestyle of the Northwest Indians, some of whom made Orcas their home until 1900. Other projects involve the students' families. "I send home instructions, and the parents help with cutting, constructing, and sanding life-size papier mâché masks and jewelry, and miniature totem poles, tools, balsa wood canoes, log houses, and weapons. The dioramas are so detailed that we even see dried fish on racks in the villages," Mrs. Brown exclaims. The culmination of Northwest Indian days is a field trip to the Indian Museum in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Despite her somewhat nontraditional educational approaches, Gail Brown considers herself very much "an old-fashioned teacher." She explains: "I want to make it clear that kids *are* getting through all their required textbook assignments. At Orcas School, we *are* meeting our teaching and learning achievement objectives. We simply meet the objectives in a somewhat different way.

"However, attendance and test scores are up noticeably when arts are used in the classroom." Mrs. Brown notes "When the arts are used, children can't wait to get to school each day. They don't want to miss a thing, and they're excited about learning!" Gail Brown's students do not hold the monopoly on looking forward to school each day. As she says, "When I first began using the arts as a teaching and learning aid, I felt a little guilty about having such a good time on the job. The arts bring excitement to my life every day, and when the semester starts in September, it's a new beginning for me, too. I can experiment with new teaching methods using the arts, and look forward to doing so."

Theme 6: Use of the arts to meet the needs of special students

Much has been written on education and the special student–the "exceptional" child who may be academically or artistically gifted or talented, learning disabled, emotionally troubled, or physically handicapped. We do not wish here to duplicate such materials, but we feel it is important to note that some of the most exciting examples of one teacher's use of the arts involve meeting the special needs of such students. Increased attention span, improved socialization, development of fine and gross motor skills and coordination, cognitive growth, enhanced self-concept–these are some of the personal achievements directly attributable to using arts in teaching disabled, troubled, and handicapped students. As for gifted and

talented children, classroom use of the arts can provide recognition of their abilities, and special arts projects, in addition to the prescribed curriculum, guarantee them an appropriate challenge.

■ "I have a special class of twelve little boys," **Gwen Seanor** says with affection. "Most of them come from broken homes and have few material possessions. They're very frustrated–accusative of their classmates and disruptive. Their attention span is short, and some have been held back in third grade two or three years. Most are reading at or below first-grade level, and, as of last year, they showed little sign of academic advancement."

Mrs. Seanor teaches third grade at the Fitzgerald, Georgia, Elementary School. Located about 175 miles southeast of Atlanta, Fitzgerald is the only town in rural Ben Hill County–red clay cotton country with some light industry scattered across the area to bolster the economy.

Last year, Gwen Seanor was asked to take primary responsibility for an experimental class for the twelve students who most need academic tutoring and reinforcement. The class involves an extremely structured academic schedule, and the pupils are divided into two groups of six with a focus on math, spelling, writing, and a "double dose of reading." An art major and former full-time art teacher, Mrs. Seanor uses the arts in all subjects to motivate, illustrate, and enhance learning activities for her students.

"My boys *love* this class!" Gwen Seanor exults. "One reason, of course, is that there aren't any girls in it. Another reason, though, is our *special* arts project." What is it? Wheels! Mrs. Seanor's twelve boys construct a series of vehicles from a variety of materials. "I wanted this class to have a *special* project, something only open to its members. Little boys love cars, and so I amplified on an idea for vehicle construction that I had seen in a book. We start with a convertible made from egg cartons. Then we construct a van–fully customized–from a gallon milk carton. Next, we make a jeep from a quart milk carton. We also make model bicycles, unicycles, and racing cars. The boys paint all the details, even faces of the people they imagine to be riding in the vehicle."

This theme carries over to homework assignments as well. For instance, Mrs. Seanor will draw a vehicle at the top of a homework sheet and ask that parents help their children write in complete sentences a story about that vehicle, and color the vehicle. The short stories will relate who owns the racing car or jeep, who the passengers are, where the car is going or where it has been, and a description of the vehicle. This helps the students develop their imaginations, sentence structuring, handwriting, spelling, and reading comprehension abilities. The students collect their homework assignment sheets throughout the school year for inclusion in a book they can keep.

Are Mrs. Seanor's students making progress? Her curriculum supervisor responds with a resounding yes, and points to "dramatic results in increased interest in learning activities." Mrs. Seanor gives the arts a large degree of credit for stimulating the interest and attention of her class. "I *expect* my students to be better," she says. "Sometimes they disappoint me, but they *are* making progress. They definitely are much more interested in school, they are getting along with others much better, and their self-esteem certainly has improved."

■ At the James Monroe Elementary School in Oklahoma City, classroom teacher **Rebecca Stewart** uses the arts throughout the day as she works with hearing-impaired fourth graders. Ms. Stewart begins each class day by placing an object on a view screen and having the students explain what they think it may be—other than the obvious shape or thing. This helps her students think creatively while building vocabulary skills. In math and reading, as well as in other areas of the standard curriculum, she uses the arts to help her students grasp new ideas, particularly abstract material.

In addition to integrating the arts in her prescribed classroom subjects, Becky Stewart regularly takes her students to concerts, plays, dance recitals, and other arts events. She commented recently that after attending a concert and dance recital and discussing the two, her students were able to accomplish their most extensive creative writing to date. Ms. Stewart's students are not only arts spectators, however. They have performed at the State Department of Education Christmas party, at a conference on arts and higher education, and at the state fairgrounds during a conference entitled, appropriately, "Find the Gift in Every Child."

Ms. Stewart, meanwhile, continues to expand and refine her teaching abilities and her personal artistic potential. For instance, she has enrolled in classes in the art of mime and participated in many in-service drama training workshops. Last summer her commitment to using the arts in teaching deaf students spurred her to attend a two-week training course offered by the National Theater for the Deaf.

During the current school year, Ms. Stewart's pupils were treated to performances of *The Miracle Worker*. Interpreters helped them understand the drama. No doubt Becky Stewart can help her students understand the significance of a miracle worker even more thoroughly than can the drama itself.

■ "What should be done with the Paramount Theatre?" That was the question students of **Stephen Shaw** put to Middletown, New York, citizens, including shoppers, theatre managers, and the mayor. Mr. Shaw teaches fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at the

Chorley Elementary School in Middletown, a rural community of 20,000 located about 65 miles northwest of New York City.

He is also in charge of developing district programs for the gifted, and in this bailiwick, as well as in his general classroom teaching, he fully integrates the performing arts and the opportunity for creative expression. In developing programs for gifted and talented students, Mr. Shaw found that the students most lacked the ability to practice problem solving. He subsequently developed a problem-solving unit, and it was in that class that he and his students decided to focus on a Middletown problem: the abandoned Paramount Theatre, formerly a movie house.

Under Stephen Shaw's guidance, twenty-five students pursued in a logical process an appropriate response to the issue. After much library research and fact-finding at the local library and historical society and through demographic surveys, the sixth graders generated, during a brainstorming period, possible uses for the 1,100-seat theatre now owned by the town. Among the forty or so ideas they spawned were a museum, bowling alley, shops, office space, and even its reopening as a movie house.

Basing their opinion on such criteria as the cost of utilities and the opinions of the individuals interviewed, Mr. Shaw's students suggested that Middletown convert the Paramount into a cultural center run by the Orange County Council of the Arts.

Two weeks later, the town did in fact adopt the proposal of Stephen Shaw's sixth graders at Chorley School, and, as a local resident says, "the Arts Council is still feeling the positive repercussions." The end result: the Paramount is an abandoned building no more, Middletown enjoys a cultural center in the center of town, and Mr. Shaw's students successfully completed course-work that included critical thinking, questioning and research, and creative problem solving at its best.

Theme 7: Integration of the arts throughout the course of study

More so than any other discipline, the arts can help students forge strong links to connect the various elements of their curricula. The arts can prove useful and exciting when used now and then in one or two subjects, but their strength is most evident when they are carefully and consistently integrated throughout the entire course of study. This is not to discount the importance of the standard sequential curriculum prescribed by district and state education departments. Rather, it is to illuminate the countless ways in which one teacher can weave common arts themes through each subject—math, social studies, the language arts, science, history—and in so doing, provide common points of reference for each subject area. (For more information on this section, you may wish to refer to AEA Report 8, *Arts in the curriculum.*)

■ "Children's sustained interest in a topic is one of the benefits of integrating the arts in the curriculum," explains **Peter Rawitsch**, a third-grade classroom teacher at Reeds Ferry School in Merrimack, New Hampshire. "Their interest provides for better quality learning."

A composer and musician, it is natural for Mr. Rawitsch to use music in his classroom. However, he also infuses the visual arts, drama, movement, and creative writing into the fabric of every lesson—math, science, social studies, and language arts. "I integrate the arts in many skill areas to help my students use all their senses to perceive and understand the world. The rich variety of activities challenges their thinking on many levels."

One unit he created for his third graders centers around the word *jack*. "I was finding so many wonderful songs, stories, and rhymes which contained *jack* words," he says, "it seemed natural to organize them into *jack* subject areas. My primary goal was to have the children share my excitement of our language by searching and discovering new *jack* words." (During the preceding two months, he is quick to note, the class worked on the required skills for reading, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, spelling, penmanship, verbal expression, computation, measurement, problem solving, and library skills, as well as a variety of activities in the areas of science, social studies, visual arts, movement, and theatre arts.)

"With the exception of a few *jack* songs and stories, all the *jack* words the children learned were ones *they* found. Because the unit was child-centered, the related *jack* activities and projects were spontaneous and open-ended," explains Mr. Rawitsch. For example, math-oriented activities included the games of jackstones (division/problem solving), jackstraws (adding scores), and slapjack (probability). *Jack* words which developed into theatre arts activities included Jack Benny (the production of a radio comedy), Johnny Jack and Jack Finney (the complete production of the play *St. George and the Dragon*), and "The House That Jack Built" (adapted for a puppet show).

As a student teacher, Mr. Rawitsch recognized the "shortage of things in the classroom relating to the outside world." In December 1976 the oil tanker *Argo Merchant* ran aground off Nantucket, and her cargo contaminated the New England coast. To explain the event and its repercussions to third and fourth graders, Mr. Rawitsch composed a song, which he taught to his students. The verses told the story and the chorus asked questions about the event. A dream chorus posed questions about the future of the environment. The song sparked the curiosity and imagination of his students, and to answer questions raised in class, they collected information from a variety of community agencies. Starting with the *Argo Merchant* song to involve students and bring alive a current event, this learning experience then developed into a problem-solving unit.

"Motivation . . . excitement . . . coming to school with questions—that's what determines the quality of learning," asserts Peter Rawitsch. "I daily see the success of the integrated arts approach in my classroom."

■ "At first, I didn't know what it meant to integrate the arts in the curriculum," says **Phyllis Crawford**, a teacher for the past ten years at Audubon Elementary School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. "Now, I couldn't separate them if my life depended on it."

Like many Louisiana teachers, Ms. Crawford came to the classroom with very limited (about three hours) training in the arts. Sensing that her students were bored with the classroom routine, she began to search for a more exciting way to teach. She began by reading curriculum materials suggested by specialists, participating in in-service teacher training programs, and working with an Audubon art specialist. In the beginning, Ms. Crawford explains, her emphasis in the classroom was strictly "art for art's sake." However, as she and her colleagues gained self-confidence, the arts were integrated into all subject areas and used to help teach such basic skills as mathematics and reading.

Two years ago, she was asked to become a reading specialist and use the skills she had acquired in the arts as a first-grade teacher. In the area of vocabulary development, for example, Ms. Crawford now uses music and the visual arts simultaneously to teach lessons on homonyms. Students are asked to write sentences using several homonyms. Pictures are drawn to illustrate the meanings of the words, and songs, created from students' sentences, are sung together in class.

One of the many projects in which Phyllis Crawford annually involves her students is the competition for the Christmas Seals Campaign. During the past five years, Audubon students have submitted their artwork in the competition. Each year an Audubon student has won the competition for the state of Louisiana. For three of the five years, the winning students were from Ms. Crawford's classroom. Despite her students' artistic success, she asserts, "You don't have to be creative to be able to inspire creativity in children."

The Louisiana State Department of Education, recognizing Phyllis Crawford's success at Audubon, asked her to play a fundamental role in the development of a book designed to show teachers that the arts offer an alternative way of teaching the standard curriculum. Published by the department, *The Pebble Book* offers suggestions incorporating the visual arts, music, dance and movement, and drama into daily classroom activities. As a outgrowth of the *The Pebble Book*, the Louisiana Alliance for the Arts, in conjunction with the State Department of Education and the Kennedy Center, has recently produced a twenty-seven-minute videotape profiling Ms. Crawford's work in the classroom entitled, *One Thing Leads to Another*. The tape is designed to "turn on" teachers to the arts and demonstrate what it means to integrate the arts into the curriculum.

Phyllis Crawford feels her attitude about teaching has taken a "180-degree turn" as a result of bringing the arts into her classroom. "I can get the maximum from my kids on everything we do, in all kinds of activities." She continues, "I love getting up in the morning—doing what I'm doing. And not everyone can say that."

Theme 8: Demonstration of professional leadership

Using the arts in classroom teaching is but one way an individual teacher can advocate their recognition as part of the basic fabric of learning. Hundreds of dedicated educators—many on their own time—are emerging as leaders in the arts in education movement. Their contributions, which assume a variety of forms, include writing proposals; conducting teacher workshops; developing curricula and curricula materials; coordinating related arts activities for multiple teachers and classes, and schoolwide events; authoring journal articles and books; and advocating support for arts in education at the community, state, and national level.

■ "I've always been interested in using the arts in my classroom," says **Nancy Brosh**, "but after coordinating our school's Dancer-in-Residence Program five years ago, I became very committed to the power of the arts as a teaching approach." Ms. Brosh teaches fourth and fifth graders at the open-plan Liberty Elementary School in Danville, Illinois, a town of about 40,000 on the Indiana border. Her enthusiasm for student response to the Dancer-in-Residence program prompted her to propose and subsequently coordinate, in addition to her classroom duties, a daily fine arts program for the students at Liberty.

"Most of the teachers, including myself, need the extra motivation that a structured arts program provides," she explains. "Soon after the Dancer-in-Residence program, which was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois State Department of Education initiated an arts in general education program to promote the use of arts in the classroom. After attending workshops to learn the organizational structure of such a program, I proposed to the Liberty faculty a daily fine arts program for grades four, five, and six." The other teachers and the administration were enthusiastic, and the program now consists of thirty-five minutes of daily instruction in a variety of art forms, including dance, drama, music, visual arts, and art appreciation.

Liberty teachers use a unit approach to structure the fine arts program, creating four or five theme units each school year. This

year's circus unit, for instance, offered possibilities for study in a multitude of curriculum areas. Students explored the history of circuses and examined circus memorabilia. In English class, they read stories about circus life. In art, clown masks were constructed, and in dance and drama, students studied mime and imaginative movement. In music, students focused on circus tunes and musical style, such as percussion and brass instrumentation. The culmination of the circus unit was a PTA-sponsored "circus" in which all of Liberty's 320 students participated.

With the success of Liberty's initial Dancer-in-Residence program and the school's popular fine arts program, Ms. Brosh's principal suggested that she write a proposal for another artist-in-residence. This time, he suggested, the artist might be a writer. Her proposal was funded by the Illinois Arts Council, and the five-week residency took place in spring, 1981.

Nancy Brosh's efforts on behalf of the arts have not gone unnoticed. The Illinois State Department of Education recently produced a fifteen-minute film, *Moving to the Fine Arts*, focusing on Liberty's fine arts program. Most important, Liberty's students are "excited about coming to school," Ms. Brosh says. "Arts represent a teaching approach that gets the concept across more clearly. The more senses you involve, the more easily the concept will be learned. The concept becomes more concrete and more relevant to the children's lives. Slow learners as well as gifted students are much more aware and their abilities more fully developed after they've been exposed to a program like the fine arts program at Liberty."

■ **Karen Carlson**, a fourth grade teacher at the John F. Kennedy School in Hastings, Minnesota, utilized what her colleagues describe as "great skills and insight" in creating new dimensions for her recent role as coordinator for a week-long artist residency at Kennedy. Not only did she attend to such obligatory details as scheduling, arranging for the artist's pre-residency school visit, and plastering the school with posters to alert everyone to the activities and excitement surrounding the residency, but she also amplified the standard job description for her role as coordinator.

For instance, through newspaper articles and posters in locations throughout the city, she contacted community resources and involved them in the planning of the event, so that community and school shared the excitement and value of the residency. For her fourth graders, Mrs. Carlson coordinated the residency with their curriculum, stressing writing and arts activities during the session before the dates of the residency. She also started a Write to the Writers program in which the class selected an out-of-town writer with whom to correspond, thus making the link between creator, creation, and published book an easier one for the children.

To follow up the visit for her students, she initiated in-class creative writing sessions. Other teachers, inspired by an in-service workshop which Mrs. Carlson scheduled in conjunction with the residency, started writing sessions for their students. Kennedy School's visual arts teacher, impressed with the overall success of the writer residency and the teachers' follow-up class, now is in the process of establishing a residency for a visual artist.

To help Kennedy School faculty and students "keep in touch" with the writer whose residency she coordinated, Mrs. Carlson secured funding for the author's one-day return visit. In addition, she is working with

her school administration to secure funding for an annual one-week writer-in-residence program. The necessary psychological groundwork for establishing such a program has been laid, for Mrs. Carlson saw to it during the residency she coordinated that her principal and superintendent became advocates of school arts programs. She informed them in advance of activities she had scheduled for the residency. In turn, the two administrators attended literary readings at the school . . . and supported the publication of a book of selected student writings.

■ "I believe it's extremely important to come together with people who share similar ideas and advocacy strategies," asserts **Ed Jacomo**, a teacher for grades K-12 at University-Liggett School in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. "I've heard people ask, 'What can a professional organization do for me?' but I feel that *people* are what make an organization. They are its strength. In the arts, especially, we tend to feel that everybody else must do the battle—and I use that word positively—that is *ours* to do."

Mr. Jacomo, now in his twenty-third year of teaching, long has been a vocal advocate of school arts programs. A visual arts specialist, he is also sensitive to and supportive of other art forms and disciplines. He integrates music, drama, and the humanities in teaching the visual arts, and in developing and refining the visual arts curriculum for school districts.

Mr. Jacomo is committed to active membership in such professional organizations as the National Art Education Association. He is a frequent contributor to such publications as *Art Education, School Arts, and Arts and Activities*. He is an invited speaker at conferences and workshops of such professional organizations as the National Association of the Gifted and Talented, of state arts councils, and of school boards.

Ed Jacomo also has a full roster of speaking engagements before lawyers, women's clubs, and engineers. "So often in education we speak to the choir, and they're already committed to the arts in the schools," he says. "We need to talk to others, and to hear what they're doing, too. We need to expand our advocacy efforts and talk to the seemingly noneducation types of groups. We need to let them know how important the arts are in education—how the arts are actually languages for learning. We have a *responsibility* to do so."

About the teachers

It is difficult, if not impossible, to deduce generalizations regarding the teachers whose work we profile in this report. Some recognized an academic need on the part of their students and found that the arts speak to that need. Some wished to broaden the curriculum prescribed for their students and, in so doing, found that the arts serve as connecting threads in that curriculum. Some wished to share their personal love of the arts and community resources with their students. Some wished to stimulate in their own lives and careers, as well as in the lives of their students, a new element of understanding and interest. They found that the arts offer a new joy and excitement.

The starting points for bringing arts to the classroom are many, but a constant binds the experiences of the teachers. Regardless of their school's size or location, the teachers found that to bring the arts to their classrooms, it was unnecessary for a sophisticated support system or large funding elements to be in place. Rather, each teacher began with a small idea, and through individual motivation and persistence, succeeded in sharing the arts with his or her students, the school, and, in some cases, the entire community.